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ABSTRACT

General principles of planning tailor-made change strategies arise directly from the CLER (configurations, linkages, environments, resources) model, a model of planned change, as well as from the value assumptions in which the model is embedded. These principles include the following: change requires commitment, planning and management of change requires knowledge, and an invitation to change should be an invitation to total system renewal. Other principles are: that a change planner must think in terms of systems and dialectics; and that a change planner should consider the whole ensemble of the changer, the change, and the changed. Furthermore, change is often defined in the process of implementation. In planned change, description must precede prescription. Descriptions of change-relevant systems should be tested in the real world. Strategic prescriptions should arise from tested descriptions, and power is the essence of all strategy. CLER, a systematic and dialectical model of innovation diffusion and planned change, suggests that innovation diffusion or planned change is a function of four variables: configurations, linkages, environments, and resources. The CLER model suggests that the probability of occurrence of a change event can be increased through a synergetic optimization of these four variables. (YLB)

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TAILOR MADE STRATEGIES OF DISSEMINATION:

THE STORY AND THEORY CONNECTION

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TAILOR MADE STRATEGIES OF DISSEMINATION[1]:

THE STORY AND THEORY CONNECTION

By H.S. Bhola

A story from India goes like this: As ill luck would have it, a poor farmer died a sudden and untimely death, leaving behind a helpless widow and a young son. As soon as the farmer's widow came out of mourning, she took her son aside and spoke to him thus:

"My poor little boy! Your father has left this world for ever. He will never come back to us to show his love or his care. Our eyes are tearful and our hearts are sorrowful. But our stomachs are empty. There is nothing much in the house to eat. Tender as you are in years, you must go to work so that we can eat and stay alive."

The mother then told the son to go to the rich farmer who lived in the next village and to ask him for work. As the boy was about to leave, she gave him a burlap sack and said:"What the farmer gives you for your labor at the end of the day, put it safely in this sack and carefully bring it home."

The little boy went to see the rich farmer in the next village. He told the farmer of the misfortune that had befallen him and his mother

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[1]The word "dissemination" has been retained for use in this paper to conform to the Conference documentation. Our own preference is for the phrase "planned change" which is seen to cover all planned change events and processes such as innovation diffusion, dissemination, knowledge utilization, organization development, institution building, community development, technology transfer and technical assistance. The word "innovation" has been used interchangeably with "objectives of change" in the body of this paper.

and asked for work. The rich farmer was touched by the little boy's plight and gladly gave him work. At the end of the day, the farmer rewarded the boy with a pot of honey for his day's labor.

The boy had remembered too well his mother's instructions about putting in the sack whatever he got and carefully bringing it home. He poured the pot of honey into the burlap sack and began his long walk home. Needless to say, most of the honey oozed out of the burlap sack and was lost on the way. Both mother and son were full of sorrow that night.

On the next day, the mother gave her son a bottle and said:"What the farmer gives you for your labor at the end of the day, put it safely in this bottle and carefully bring it home." That evening, the farmer gave the boy a dozen eggs for his labor. The boy remembered his mother's instructions too well. He sat by himself on the edge of the field and tried dutifully to put the eggs, one by one, into the bottle. In so doing, he broke them all for the bottle had a narrow neck. Once again, that evening, there wasn't much left to take home to his mother.

On the third day, the mother gave the boy a grass basket and said: "What the farmer gives you for your labor at the end of the day, put it safely in this basket and carefully bring it home." On this third evening, the farmer gave the boy some corn flour. The boy remembered his mother's instructions too well and he put the corn flour in the loosely knit grass basket that his mother had given him that morning. Most of the flour fell out of the basket and there wasn't much flour left in the basket by the time the boy reached home. The mother did not bake much bread that evening.

As the story is told, the farmer's widow and her son did learn their lesson in the end.

But does the story have lessons for disseminators? We suggest that it does:

First, the point can be made that story and theory are connected to each other; they lie on the two ends of the same continuum. Story structures human experience for easy communication, inter-generationally and intra-generationally. Theory does exactly the same for precisely the same purpose. The structure of the story accommodates richness of detail and is suffused with emotion. The theory, however, is a story about stories. It structures at a higher level the experiences that have already been structured by many stories. Theory sheds details of particular situations as it abstracts and generalizes. The structure of theory lacks emotion but compensates with richer understandings. The pre-literate man told stories. The industrial and post-industrial man has also learned to tell theories. Indeed, the modern man finds theory to be the most practical thing in finding and making the world.

A second point can be made by expanding upon the usefulness of theory. In the story just told, the bad fate of the farmer's widow and her young son was made worse by the lack of good theory that could have helped the widow in giving open-ended instructions, and could have helped her son in inventing tailor made solutions. What the mother needed badly was a good "model of container selection" based, in turn, on a taxonomy of commodities and their properties. What the son needed, in addition, was the ability to <u>think with</u> the model of containers and to solve his "pack to carry" problems as they arose unexpectedly each day.

The third use of the story is substantive. The story teaches us, for example, that we should not invent solutions independently of problems

and that choices of strategies once made should not become sacrosanct. More importantly, we should have available to us models and taxonomies that enable us to anticipate a whole range of possible problems and to invent solutions and strategies specific to our particular situation.

To say all that needs to be said about tailor made strategies through stories will need lot of story-telling. It might be enjoyable but will not be economical in terms of time and effort. On the other hand, theory-telling while efficient, is not great fun. In fact, theory is sometimes rejected for being abstract and esoteric even before it is fully heard. And yet, we do wish to present the CLER model (Bhola, 1982), a model of planned change most suited to describing and analyzing change situations and settings and to developing tailor made dissemination strategies.

The course chosen in the following is this: A beginning is made in the middle of the story-theory continuum. Ideas on tailor made strategies of dissemination are presented first as a set of general principles. These principles are rooted, of course, in the CLER model, but are presented without too much theoretical self-consciousness. It is only after the presentation of these general principles that the CLER model itself is presented in its barest essential form. Those who are presently not much intrigued with models may want to stop with the study of the general principles stated below. On the other hand, those who fancy models and theories may want to proceed with their examination of the CLER model.

Some General Principles of Planning Change Strategies

Some general principles of planning tailor made change strategies are described below. Most of these principles arise directly from

the CLER model, but some are generated from the value assumptions in which the model is embedded:

Change requires commitment

Change, whether it is generated from the inside or is promoted from the outside, can not be lead by the uninvolved or the mildly interested. Change requires personal commitment and social awareness. There are, of course, rewards and satisfactions for the change agent, but such rewards and satisfactions are not easily won. Change agentry demands long hours of work and sacrifice of leisure.

Planning and management of change requires knowledge

Three types of knowledge are needed (Bhola, 1984) for the planning and management of change: Knowledge of "How the world works"; Knowledge of "How a particular sector of interest works"; and Knowledge of "How the change process works".

Making change for ourselves by ourselves, or promoting change for others, requires knowledge, but change need not be the monopoly of the expert. To make change to seek renewal is our right and our obligation. Also, most professional educators already have knowledge enough to take the initial steps in planning and implementing change. What we do need to do is not to be satisfied with what we already know but to continue learning about change agentry and change processes. To do so we need to reflect on our own personal experiences to systematize our tacit knowledge into usable knowledge; we need to read in the social and behavioral sciences to increase our understanding of social processes and to improve our repertoire of social and behavioral technology; we need to get consultant help to bring us the knowledge that we do need but do not seem to have; and, most, importantly, we need to learn to think and

act together through participative planning, participative implementation and participative evaluation of change.

An invitation to change should be an invitation to total system renewal

Change whether generated from within or offered from the outside should not be merely additive. It should be used as an invitation to total system renewal involving a fresh examination of the calculus of means and ends employed by an institution. All invitations to change should provide an opportunity to ask questions about the system's objectives and the system's choice of strategies for attaining those objectives.

A change planner must think systems and dialectics

A change planner must have a systems view of the world. This means that the change planner must be able to see various social elements and entities of concern as existing in a connected and overlapping network of mutual interdependences.

A change planner must, at the same time, think dialectically. He must understand that things and processes are often neither primary nor secondary, but acquire their definitions only in terms of each other; and that these definitions are tentative and in continuous redefinition. Additionally, he must understand that social change is a dialectical process in yet another sense: actors in the change process are pulled in different directions, as they respond to their norms and to counternorms at the same time; and planned change interventions create effects that are both apposite and opposite.

Clearly, this means that the change agent must work with models that accommodate system thinking and dialectical thinking, in terms of

being able to include the context, the complexity and the continuity of planned change.

Change planner should consider the whole ensemble of the changer, the change and the changed

Change is a transaction between and among the various stakeholders around a change objective. The change maker must, therefore, think in terms of the whole ensemble of the planner system (P), the objective of change (O), and the adopter system (A). The planner system need not always be an outsider, apart from the adopter system. Indeed, the planner system can be a subsystem of the adopter system, and, thus, an integral part of the adopter system. Or, the planner system and the adopter system may be the same one social entity, but playing two different roles--alternatively as the change maker and as the change adopter.

The three parts of the ensemble -- P,O, and A --should be seen to exist in a relationship of mutual definition as each effects and is effected by the other. The initial objectives will define the boundaries of both the planner system and the adopter system. The particular configurations of the planner system and the adopter system and their resources may, in turn, demand a redefinition of initial objectives.

Change is often defined in the process of implementation

The ensemble P,O, and A suggested above includes the change objective (O). The change objective (O) may be well defined and packaged as an innovation or it may be a somewhat ambiguous change objective. In the latter case, the change objective will need to be defined in the very process of its implementation. While subjective expressions of a problematic situation will exist among the various stakeholders within and outside an institutional setting, the problem may be far from being

well understood. Even when formal statements of the problem have been attempted, these may not be statements of the real problem. Indeed, there may be deliberate or unconscious attempts at problem avoidance.

After a more or less satisfactory definition of objectives has been obtained, the innovation or the change objective should be unpacked: it should be described both in technical terms and in terms of social implications. It must be understood that the incorporation of a packaged innovation or the implementation of a change objective is never a merely technical matter. It is always a combination of the technical and the social or structural.

Adaptations of an innovation or a set of educational objectives are generally possible without a loss of the integrity of the innovation or of change objectives. There is always some elasticity in the definition of ends as well as in the choice of means -- of course, within limits. It is important that the change agent considers possibilities of adaptations of innovations and objectives and develops a clear interval of acceptance for adaptation without loss of integrity.

In planned change description must precede prescription

Good descriptions are always pregnant with predictions and, therefore, with prescriptions. The most important part of planning change is developing good descriptions of change-relevant systems. Such descriptions must cover all the necessary aspects, each in sufficient detail. The following four aspects must be covered: configurations, linkages, environments, and resources.

Configurations (C). What are the actors interested in making change; and what are the actors who would be effected by such change? What individuals, what groups, what institutions, what communities and subcultures will be involved as stakeholders? How are these various

stakeholders, on both sides of the change equation, related to each other in social, economic, political and bureaucratic networks? Finally, how is the change agent as one individual or as one functionary in a larger planner system related to others in the planner system and to the adopter system?

Linkages (L). Without linkage neither information can be communicated nor influence can be brought to bear on each other. As part of developing descriptions of change-relevant systems, questions should be asked if linkages exist between the planner system and the adopter system. We must also examine if linkages exist within the planner system and within the adopter system.

Environments (E). As part of the descriptions of the planner system and the adopter system, a note should be made of environments that surround the change transaction. It should be remembered that the planner system and the adopter system may not be responding to the same environment but to different ones at different times; and that those environments may have the quality of being supportive, neutral or inhibitive of the change effort.

Resources (R). What are the resources available to the planner system to promote change? Does the planner system have the whole range of resources (conceptual, influence, material, personnel, institutional, and time) that might be needed for the promotion of change? Does the adopter system have the types of resources and at the levels needed by it for incorporating the change in question?

As was mentioned earlier, in developing definitions of change objectives and descriptions of change-relevant systems, change objectives themselves will undergo redefinition and the boundaries of the change-relevant

system will expand or contract. In some cases, the overlap between the planner system and the adopter system will be deliberately increased to suit our values in regard to the need for participative planning, and participative implementation of change.

Descriptions of change-relevant systems should be tested in the real world

Descriptions of the planner system and the adopter system should be validated through reality testing in the real context of change. Description is a multi-layered process. It starts with an initial attempt at ordering various individuals, groups, institutions and communities that seem to be involved in the change transaction into a network of relationships -- formal and informal. This is done through a mix of intuition and formal knowledge. At the second level of description, the social entities constituting the planner system and the adopter system are typified and categorized to build a set of expectations about their normal behavior and their future behavior under different possible interventions. Finally, at a third level, initial descriptions are tested in the real context of change and revised as they are validated.

Strategic prescriptions should arise from tested descriptions

As has been indicated above, there is nothing more potent than a good description. Tailor made strategies should arise from definitions of innovations and objectives and descriptions of change-relevant systems. It is such definitions and descriptions that will suggest where change interventions might be made: whether changes are called for in configurations and configurational relationships; or in linkages within and between them; or in their response patterns to surrounding environments; or in the

deployment of resources; or in two or more of these aspects in synergetic combination.

A few further points may be made in regard to the design of strategies:

1. The change agent does not operate in the best of all worlds. What should be changed in an ideal sense may not always be amenable to change. In real world settings, in real time, the change agent may have to be satisfied with what is possible and not be able to do what seems ideally necessary.

2. Different change strategies may have to be used for achieving the same one change objective in different settings: training and staff development may be implemented in one setting; adhocratic organization may be introduced in another setting.

3. Different strategies may be used during different phases of the same change episode: institution building may be implemented in the first phase, organization development in the second phase, and instructional development in the last phase.

Power is the essence of all strategy

By definition, the ability to change means the ability to control. Control is effected through the exercise of power. Power need not be brute power. There are other more acceptable currencies of power: the power of knowledge, the power of persuasion, and the power to offer or withhold rewards. Our norms and values should help us in choosing morally and socially acceptable currencies of power in the exercise of power as we design change strategies. Sometimes, the power of the adopter system or of competitive systems will be deliberately encouraged to come into play because of our particular belief systems.

Planned change is a continuing experiment

Planned change is not a linear process with pre-determined outputs and outcomes. Planned change is an experiment in and on our world of work and life. The problem of change is never fully and finally solved: the old problem changes into a different problem requiring new commitments and new interventions. Thus, planned change is a continuous experiment. Each strategic intervention in the P,O, and A ensemble, creates a new P,O, and A ensemble demanding a new intervention. The process goes on.

CLER -- A Systemic and Dialectical Model
of Innovation Diffusion and Planned Change

As was indicated, the principles of planned change presented above are rooted in a theoretical model: the CLER model. The CLER model suggests that innovation diffusion or planned change is a function of four variables:

Configurations and configurational relationships brought into being by the change transaction between the planner system and the adopter system;

Linkages within each of the planner system and the adopter system and between the planner system and the adopter system;

Environments surrounding the planner system and the adopter system; and

Resources available to the planner system to promote change and to the adopter system to incorporate that change.

The CLER model suggests that the probability of occurrence of a change event can be increased through a synergetic optimization of these four variables. (Please note that optimization is not necessarily maximization.)

The conceptualization of the planner system and the adopter system does not necessarily suggest two separate social entities, but does suggest two separate social roles. Thus, the planner system need not always be an outsider imposing change on an adopter system. The two systems may be in a state overlap, suggesting participative change; or the two systems may be fully congruent, suggesting one system in two roles of the planner and the adopter, in other words, a system engaged in self-renewal.

The innovation or the objective of change is seen to have a dialectical relationship with the planner system and the adopter system. Each innovation, it is asserted, will influence the definition of the boundaries of the planner system and the adopter system. In turn, the planner system and the adopter system will stipulate adaptations of the innovation initially offered. Thus, the following ensemble:

(Planner System) X (Change Objective) X (Adopter System)

or (P) X (O) X (A).

The CLER model suggests that the planner system and the adopter system should be described in terms of C,L,E and R, thus giving us the following version of the change ensemble:

$(CLER_p)$ X (O) X $(CLER_a)$.

Four different social configurations have been identified by the CLER model: Individuals (I), Groups (G), Institutions or organizations (IS), and Cultures, subcultures or communities (CL). Each of the four can act in the planner role as well as in the adopter role, thereby giving us sixteen possible configurational relationships as follows:

CHANGE ADOPTERS

I-I	I-G	I-IS	I-CL
G-I	G-G	G-IS	G-CL
IS-I	IS-G	IS-IS	IS-CL
CL-I	CL-G	CL-IS	CL-CL

CHANGE PLANNERS

These configurational relationships are used to develop configurational maps for the planner system and the adopter system.

Linkages have been defined in the CLER model as linkages between (L_b) the planner system and the adopter system; and linkages within (L_w) each of the planner system and the adopter system. Linkages will also be either formal or informal. As part of the description of the planner system and the adopter system, the configurational maps developed above will be supplemented by what can be called linkage-typing.

Descriptions of P and A will also take in view the environments in which they are placed. The P and A in a planned change ensemble will not necessarily be responding to the same one environment. The quality of the environment may be inhibitive, neutral or supportive.

Finally, descriptions of P and A must take cognizance of resources which are of six kinds: conceptual resources, resources of influence and goodwill, material resources, personnel resources, institutional resources and time resources. Both the planner system and the adopter system need resources. The planner system needs resources to promote change and the adopter system needs resources to incorporate change.

The (O) in the (P) X (O) X (A) ensemble, also needs definition. The innovation or objective of change should be described as a socio-technical entity, describing its technology as well as the social correlates

of the technology involved. Suitable intervals of acceptance should be established within which adaptations of the means and ends calculus of the innovation will be considered acceptable.

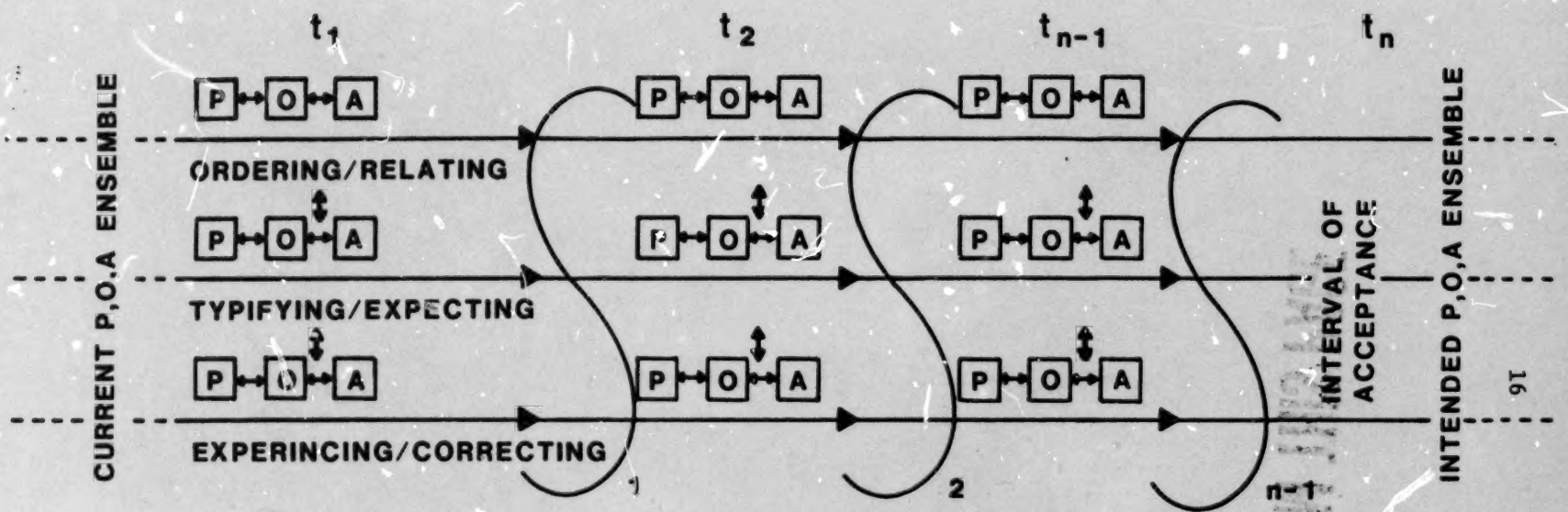
The grammar of planned actions

As just described, the initial task in the planning of change is to conceptualize P,O and A as existing in a dialectical relationship and to describe the three entities in the ensemble. The process of description, we now suggest, is a multi-layered process involving ordering/relating, typifying/expecting and experiencing/correcting. (See figure on next page.)

Ordering/Relating. Reality is socially constructed. Ordering/relating involves making an initial picture of this reality. We impose a structure on our world, carving out convenient boundaries for the planner and adopter systems. We structure subsystems within systems to examine relationships and overlaps. Some temporal order is imposed as purposes and causes are assigned. Both facts and values are involved in this process of ordering and relating.

Typifying/Expecting. Once the reality surrounding the change agent has been ordered as well as the change agent's relationship with and within this ordered reality, then, the process of typifying and expecting begins. The various social entities, social processes and environments are typified as belonging to certain classes and categories. Expectations are built in regard to their possible future behavior under change. This is what makes change an experiment rather than a linear and deterministic action.

Experiencing/Correcting. During the process of experiencing and correcting, models and structures on the one hand, and typifications and expectations on the other hand, are reality-tested. Descriptions initially developed are now validated.



PLANNED CHANGE AS A CONTINUOUS DIALECTICAL PROCESS

P is the planner system
O is the change objective
A is the client system
S is the situation-specific strategy

Strategizing for change

The three interrelated processes described above would give the change planner a description of the social reality and an opportunity to validate such a description. In the very description of the P,O, and A ensemble, the planner of change will find modes for intervention in the system. The description might suggest that the initial change objective needs revision. Or, the description may suggest changes in C,L,E, or R aspects of the system or in two or more of these aspects in a synergetic relationship. This is what will provide the change planner with a tailor made situation specific strategy, S_1. (See the figure on the previous page).

It is important to point out that the CLER model in suggesting situation specific strategies is not claiming that each planned change situation is "a universe of one" and, therefore, so unique that no experience is transferable to it from other situations. What we do mean to suggest, however, is that the change planner should begin within the context, and develop description of the P,O, and A ensemble before looking for solutions. A good description will indeed compel the choice of particular solutions. Some of those solutions will be in the repertoire of the change agent. Some others will have to be brought in from the outside.

The graphic presentation of the CLER model in the dialectical mode also shows that the first strategic intervention S_1 may by no means be the last one in a change episode. Intervention S_1 may create a new ensemble of P,O, and A, requiring a new strategic intervention S_2 down the line. The process will be iterative.

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